

**PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION
TEAMS' PERFORMANCE
MEASUREMENT PROCESS HAS
IMPROVED**



**SIGIR-09-013
JANUARY 28, 2009**

| Report Documentation Page | | | | Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188 | |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. | | | | | |
| 1. REPORT DATE 28 JAN 2009 | | 2. REPORT TYPE | | 3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2009 to 00-00-2009 | |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Provincial Reconstruction Teams' Performance Measurement Process has Improved | | | | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5b. GRANT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER | |
| 6. AUTHOR(S) | | | | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5e. TASK NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER | |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 400 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA, 22202-4704 | | | | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER | |
| 9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) | | | | 10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) | |
| | | | | 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) | |
| 12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited | | | | | |
| 13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES | | | | | |
| 14. ABSTRACT | | | | | |
| 15. SUBJECT TERMS | | | | | |
| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: | | | 17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR) | 18. NUMBER OF PAGES 39 | 19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
| a. REPORT unclassified | b. ABSTRACT unclassified | c. THIS PAGE unclassified | | | |



SIGIR

Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction

Summary of Report: SIGIR-09-013

Why SIGIR Did This Audit

Since October 2006 SIGIR has issued three reports examining the status, expansion, and effectiveness of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) and embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams (ePRTs) throughout Iraq. Those reports recommended that the U.S. Mission - Iraq and Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) establish a performance measurement system with clear objectives, performance measures, and milestones for the PRTs in Iraq.

SIGIR's objectives for this audit were to review the PRT program and answer these general questions: 1) Have program objectives and performance measures or metrics been established? (2) What is the status of future program plans in relation to the reduction in U.S. military forces? (3) Are lessons learned being captured that could be useful in other contingencies? (4) What actions have been taken based SIGIR's prior recommendations?

What SIGIR Recommends

SIGIR recommends that the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq direct the Director of the Office of Provincial Affairs (OPA) to update the Planning and Assessment User Guide to include a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of OPA's Plans and Assessments Cell; and a process for the desk officers to account for all required PRT or ePRT submissions each quarter. We also recommend that the Ambassador work jointly with the Commander, Multi-National Forces-Iraq to update the PRT close out strategy to take into account the impact of U.S. troop reduction plans

In commenting on a draft of this report, OPA concurred with the recommendations to clarify the roles and responsibilities of OPA's Plans and Assessments Cell, and to establish a process for the desk officers to account for all required PRT or ePRT submissions each quarter. OPA did not concur with our draft recommendation to synchronize the PRT close-out strategy with U.S. troop reduction plans. SIGIR agreed and modified the recommendation to say that the close-out strategy should take into account the impact of U.S. troop reductions. MNF-I provided comments and concurred that the PRT program should recognize the reduction in U.S. troops in its transition plans.

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PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS' PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT PROCESS HAS IMPROVED

What SIGIR Found

OPA has developed a performance assessment system for evaluating provincial capabilities; however, OPA has not consistently required the PRTs and ePRTs to develop and submit work plans that identify planned activities to address areas of weakness identified by the assessment system. This limits OPA's oversight of PRT activities and whether the PRT activities effectively address identified weaknesses at some locations. During the course of this review, OPA improved its procedures for preparing, submitting, and reviewing work plans.

In September 2008, OPA submitted a report to the U.S. Congress outlining the strategy for the eventual drawdown and close out of the PRTs. To detail how the drawdown process would be conducted, OPA issued another document on October 1, 2008, titled "The Provincial Reconstruction Teams Transition Strategy – A Roadmap." SIGIR's analysis shows these plans are condition based; that is the transition strategy identifies key events that will trigger the drawdown and close out of PRTs rather than a specific timeline for close out. SIGIR believes that given the recently signed security agreement and the deadlines for withdrawal, it is uncertain whether military resources will be available to support PRTs until all conditions for close out are met. Further, the relationship between the U.S. government and the Iraqi government continues to evolve raising additional questions about the future role of PRTs in terms of the assistance that may be desired by the Government of Iraq and how it will be provided.

The PRTs and their supporting agencies have put effective processes in place to capture lessons learned. These include weekly situation reports, U.S. State Department cables, the Center for Army Lessons Learned playbook, and quarterly meetings of PRT team leaders in Baghdad. Additionally, DoS is developing a database to compile PRT lessons learned in Iraq.

In prior reports SIGIR has made 12 recommendations to improve PRT program effectiveness. Prior to this review, SIGIR closed eight recommendations based on management action. Our current review found management action sufficient to recommend closing three of the four remaining open SIGIR recommendations. A recommendation to require PRTs to submit work plans for accomplishing objectives within established milestones remains open pending further action.

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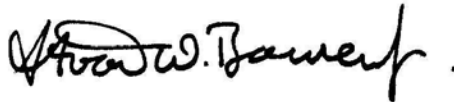
MEMORANDUM FOR U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE
U.S. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ
COMMANDER, U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND
COMMANDING GENERAL, MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE-IRAQ
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR, IRAQ TRANSITION ASSISTANCE OFFICE
MISSION DIRECTOR-IRAQ, U.S. AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: Provincial Reconstruction Teams' Performance Measurement Process Has Improved (SIGIR 09-013)

This report is provided for your information and use. It discusses the results of our review of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams' use of performance measures in Iraq. This review was conducted as SIGIR project 8036. The audit was conducted by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) as project 8017 under the authority of Public Law 108-106, as amended, which also incorporates the duties and responsibilities of inspectors general under the Inspector General Act of 1978. It is also in response to a requirement in Section 842 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2008 (Public Law 110-181) that SIGIR develop, in consultation with other audit agencies, a comprehensive plan for audits of private security functions in Iraq.

We considered written comments on a draft of this report from the Office of Provincial Affairs and the Multi-National Force-Iraq, when finalizing this report. The comments on the recommendations are included in Appendix F. Technical comments were also provided and are addressed in the report where appropriate.

We appreciate the courtesies extended to the staff. For additional information on this report, please contact Mr. Glenn Furbish (glenn.furbish@sigir.mil / 703-428-1058); or Ms. Nancee Needham at (nancee.needham@iraq.centcom.mil) / 1-240-553-0581-3793.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stuart W. Bowen, Jr.", followed by a period.

Stuart W. Bowen, Jr.
Inspector General

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Provincial Reconstruction Teams' Performance Measurement Process Has Improved

SIGIR-09-013

January 28, 2009

Executive Summary

Introduction

Since October 2006 the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) has issued three reports examining the status, expansion, and effectiveness of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams (ePRTs) throughout Iraq. The PRT initiative is a civilian-military interagency effort that is the primary U.S. government interface between U.S., coalition partners, and provincial and local governments throughout Iraq's 18 provinces. The PRT program was established in October 2005, to assist Iraq's provincial governments in developing a transparent and sustained capability to govern, to promote increased security and rule of law, to promote political and economic development, and to provide the provincial administration necessary to meet the basic population needs. The ePRT program was established in 2007 as part of the surge of U.S. troops into Iraq. Under the program PRT members were embedded directly into brigade combat teams that were part of the surge. The ePRTs deploy in neighborhoods and work at the district and municipal levels. The goal is to create areas where moderates will have political space to operate and to bring anti-Iraqi forces under control.

Our objectives for this audit were to review the PRT program and answer these general questions:

- Have program objectives and performance measures or metrics been established?
- What is the status of future program plans in relation to the reduction in U.S. military forces?
- Are lessons learned being captured that could be useful in other contingencies?
- What actions have been taken based on SIGIR's prior recommendations?

Results in Brief

Performance Measurement Has Improved

The Office of Provincial Affairs (OPA) has developed a performance assessment system for evaluating provincial capabilities; however, OPA has not consistently required the PRTs to develop and submit written work plans that identify planned activities to address areas of weakness identified by the assessment system. This limits OPA's oversight of PRT activities and its knowledge of whether the PRT activities effectively address identified weaknesses in

some provinces. During the course of this review, OPA improved its procedures for preparing, submitting, and reviewing work plans.

OPA's performance assessment system—the Maturity Model assessment process—requires each PRT to submit a quarterly assessment of its province's capacity based on five lines of activity: governance, political development, economic development, political reconciliation, and rule of law. According to OPA's *Planning and Assessment User Guide*, the assessments then serve as the basis for preparing work plans to address activities identified as needing attention. SIGIR analyzed the PRT assessments and work plans for the quarter ending in August 2008 and found that about 86% of the PRTs completed their assessments, but only about 25% prepared updated supporting work plans. Most of the instances in which plans were not prepared occurred in the ePRTs. Table 1 shows the results of the SIGIR analysis.

Table 1—Number of PRTs and ePRTs with Assessment and Work Plans, August 2008

| | PRTs | ePRTs | Total |
|--------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|
| Number | 16 | 12 | 28 |
| Prepared a province assessment | 15 (94%) | 9 (75%) | 24 (86%) |
| Prepared an updated work plan | 5 (31%) | 2 (17%) | 7 (25%) |

Source: SIGIR analysis of OPA data.

SIGIR identified a number of reasons why work plans were not prepared, including weaknesses in guidance and a lack of adherence to requirements. For example, SIGIR found that OPA's *Planning and Assessment User Guide* requires OPA desk officers, who are responsible for coordination with PRTs, to review and understand the PRT work plans. PRT team leaders approve all section work plans and consolidate them into one PRT work plan. Desk officers then “ensure the work plan accurately reflects the Maturity Model assessments and the categories within them.” However, the guidelines do not identify the actions that desk officers should take when work plans are not submitted or when the plans are not aligned with the assessment categories. Additionally, some OPA desk officers failed to follow the guide and did not consistently ask for quarterly updates of work plans.

During the SIGIR review, OPA revised its *Planning and Assessment User Guide* to address these issues. SIGIR's review of the new guide showed significant improvement. For example:

- Desk officers are now clearly responsible for the quality control of the PRT assessments.
- Desk officers are responsible for ensuring that PRTs complete and turn in their work plans within the reporting timelines.
- Desk officers are directed to report PRTs that do not submit work plans to the Deputy Director, OPA.

- Desk officers are required to ensure that the work plans' focus and priorities address problems identified by the performance assessment.
- These changes, if properly implemented, should improve OPA's internal controls over the process of reporting PRT assessments and work plans.

One additional area in the guide that could be further improved relates to clarifying the role of the Plans and Assessments Cell in reviewing assessments. The new guide does not identify the Cell's roles and responsibilities such as factors to be assessed and processes for providing review feedback.

Drawdown and Close Out of PRTs Is Condition Based, Leaving Timing Uncertain

In September 2008, OPA submitted a report to the Congress outlining the strategy for the eventual drawdown and close-out of the PRTs. To detail how the drawdown process would be conducted, OPA issued another document on October 1, "The Provincial Reconstruction Teams Transition Strategy – a Roadmap." SIGIR's analysis shows that these plans are condition-based: the transition strategy identifies key events that will trigger the drawdown rather than a specific close-out timeline. SIGIR believes that given the recently signed security agreement and the deadlines for withdrawal, it is uncertain whether military resources will be available to support PRTs until all conditions for close out are met. Further, the relationship between the U.S. government and the Iraqi government continues to evolve raising additional questions about the future role of PRTs in terms of the assistance that may be desired by the Government of Iraq and how it will be provided.

Lessons Learned Are Being Captured

PRTs and their supporting agencies have put effective processes in place to capture lessons learned including weekly situation reports, DoS cables, quarterly PRT team leader meetings, and the Center for Army Lessons Learned's *Provincial Reconstruction Team Playbook*. Additionally, DoS is developing a database to compile PRT lessons learned in Iraq. When completed, the DoS database is planned to be accessible to all participating agencies, and will focus on best practices that could be applied to other contingency environments.

SIGIR's Prior Recommendations Have Largely Been Addressed

In prior reports on the PRT program, SIGIR made 12 recommendations to improve program effectiveness.¹ Prior to this audit, SIGIR closed eight of the recommendations, based on management action. The current audit noted additional management action that supported closing three of the four open recommendations. As discussed earlier, a prior SIGIR recommendation to require PRTs to submit work plans for accomplishing objectives within established milestones remains open awaiting further action.

¹ SIGIR 06-034, "Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq", October 29, 2006; SIGIR 07-014, "Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program Expansion in Iraq", July 25, 2007; SIGIR 07-015, "Review of the Effectiveness of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq", October 18, 2007.

Recommendations

We recommend that the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq take these actions:

1. Direct the Director of OPA to update the *Planning and Assessment User Guide* to include the following:
 - a. a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of OPA's Plans and Assessments Cell;
 - b. a process for the desk officers to account for all required PRT and ePRT submissions each quarter, including work plans for all five lines of action, and to provide feedback to the PRT or ePRT regarding missing or deficient items.
2. SIGIR also recommends that the Ambassador work jointly with the Commander, Multi-National Forces-Iraq to update the PRT close out strategy so that it takes into account the impact of U.S. troop reductions on PRT operational activities.

Management Comments and Audit Response

SIGIR received written comments on a draft of this report from OPA and MNF-I. Both sets of comments are included in Appendix F. OPA stated that it considers the report to be comprehensive, fair, and accurate. However, it did not agree with our draft recommendation to synchronize the PRT close-out strategy with U.S. troop reduction plans. According to OPA, the U.S. government aid and assistance plan should not be locked into the hard timelines for the military withdrawal from Iraq. SIGIR agreed and modified its recommendation to say that the close-out strategy should take into account the impact of U.S. troop reductions on PRT operational activities.

MNF-I concurred with our comment that PRT transition is conditions based and that the U.S. troop reduction is a condition the PRT program should accommodate or at least recognize in its transition plans.

Introduction

Since October, 2006 the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) has issued three audit reports examining the status, expansion, and effectiveness of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) throughout Iraq.² This report is our fourth on PRT operations and effectiveness and examines the PRT program's use of performance measures. In addition, the report discusses the future of PRTs, the process for capturing lesson learned, and actions taken to address SIGIR recommendations from prior reports on PRTs.

Background

In October 2005, the PRTs were established by Cable 4045, issued jointly by the U.S. Embassy-Iraq and Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I). The PRT program is a U.S.-led, civil-military effort to improve the capabilities of Iraqi provincial and local governments to govern effectively and deliver essential services. The PRT program provides integrated and multidisciplinary teams of U.S. and coalition personnel to teach, coach, and mentor provincial and local government officials in core competencies of governance and economic development. Cable 4045 was replaced by a joint U.S. Department of State (DoS) and MNF-I strategic framework, dated August 19, 2008.

The PRTs and embedded PRTs (ePRTs) comprise personnel from the DoS, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and other Departments of the U.S. government; the Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I); Iraqi-born expatriates, contractors, and Iraqi local nationals. Three PRTs are led by coalition partners, one each by Korea, Italy, and the United Kingdom. Integrated and multidisciplinary teams train, coach, and mentor provincial governments in core competencies of governance, economic development, rule of law, and infrastructure development. PRT staffing is dependent on the needs and circumstances of the individual province.

The ePRTs are embedded with Brigade Combat Teams and are responsible for providing advice, expertise, and program management to support the local counterinsurgency strategy devised with their Brigade Combat Team. In addition, ePRTs carry out program and policy guidance at the district and municipal level. On April 27, 2008 the Director of OPA issued a memo directing that the ePRTs report directly to the PRTs within their provinces.

The U.S. Embassy-Iraq's Office of Provincial Affairs (OPA) was established in May 2007 under the leadership of an ambassador-level coordinator. OPA's mission is to assist in the synchronization of governance, reconstruction, security and economic development assistance to the PRTs, and to provide coordination and de-confliction of PRT efforts with the efforts of the U.S. Mission-Iraq, coalition partners, and the Iraqi Government. MNF-I coordinates with the Embassy to provide strategic guidance to the PRT program. MNC-I, currently staffed by the

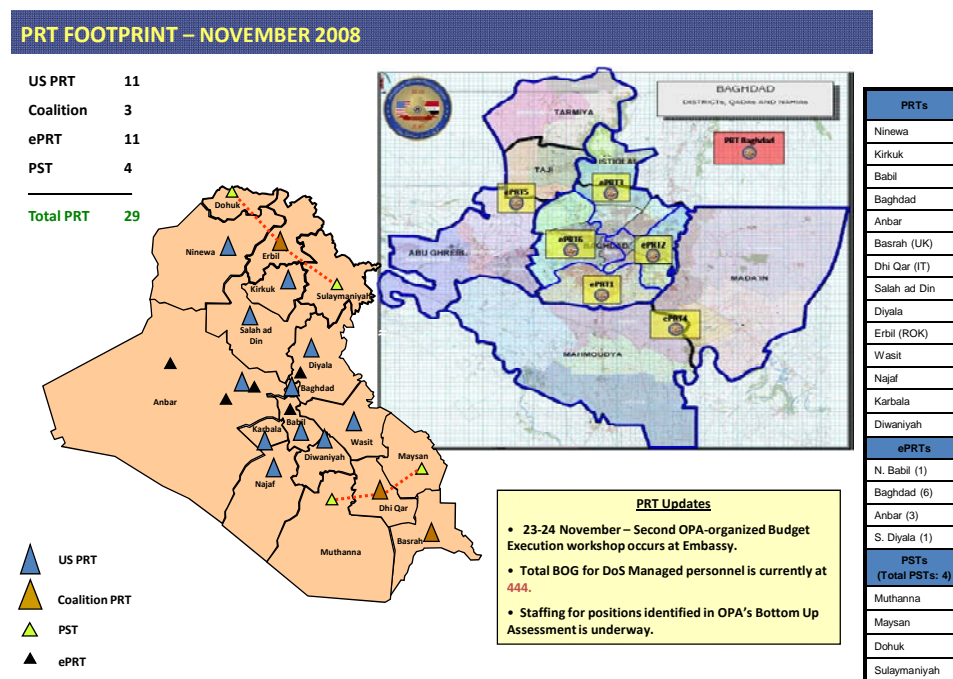
² SIGIR 06-034, "Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq", October 29, 2006; SIGIR 07-014, "Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program Expansion in Iraq", July 25, 2007; SIGIR 07-015, "Review of the Effectiveness of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq", October 18, 2007.

U.S. Army's 18th Airborne Corps, provides support to the PRTs such as movement teams and other logistical assets, along with military personnel who serve as deputy team leaders and liaison officers with the major subordinate commands in the field.

On April 29, 2008, the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad and the MNF-I established the Joint Provincial Reconstruction Team Steering Group to provide guidance, coordination, and oversight for the development of a joint strategy for PRT programs and operations. The Steering Group is chaired by the Director of OPA. Its membership includes senior directors and commanders from the DoS, USAID, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division, Iraq Transition Assistance Office, MNF-I, and MNC-I. Members of the Steering Group appointed representatives to a Joint Provincial Reconstruction Team Working Group.

As of November, 2008 there were 14 PRTs (this total includes coalition PRTs) and four Provincial Support Teams representing the 18 provinces in Iraq. Since Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah provinces report as one PRT, the total number of PRT and PSTs reporting is 16. The Provincial Support Teams are similar in function to PRTs but due to security considerations or other factors they do not reside within their provinces. Instead, the Provincial Support Teams reside on military forward operating bases and travel into their areas of responsibility as needed.

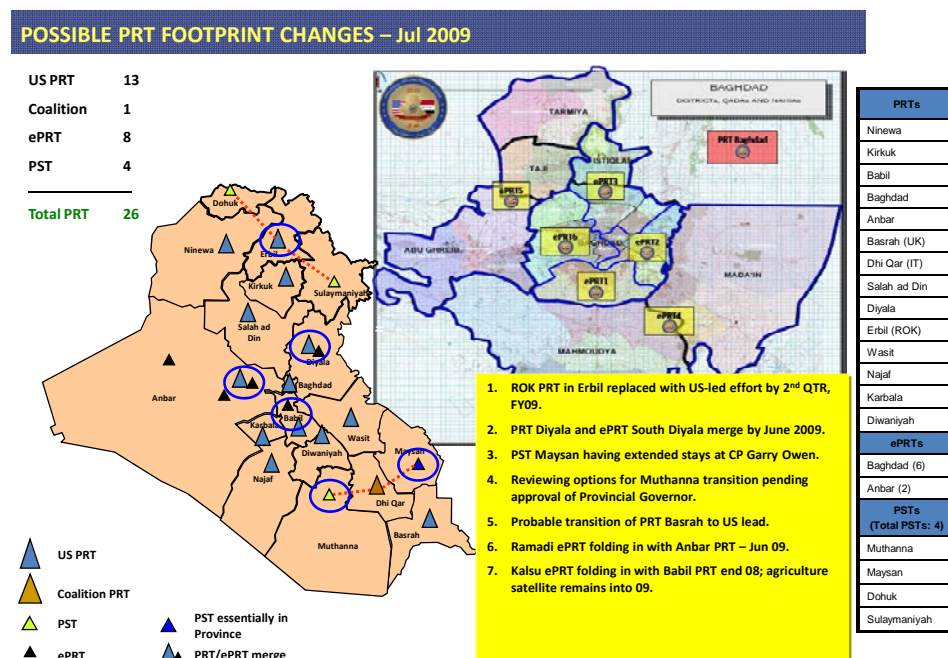
Map 1—PRT footprint, November 2008



Source: OPA

The PRT footprint is constantly changing and OPA's projections for July 2009 are shown in Map 2.

Map 2—Possible PRT footprint changes



Source: OPA

The Map 2 illustration shows a reduction of three ePRTs and a transition of two coalition PRTs into U.S. control. Both the British PRT in Basrah and the Korean PRT in Erbil are scheduled to transition to U.S. lead while the Italian PRT at Dhi Qar is expected to remain a coalition PRT. The total PRT/ePRT count from Map 1 at twenty nine reduced to Map 2 at twenty six shows progress in the PRT goal for drawdown. At the height of the surge activities the total number of PRTs and ePRTs had reached thirty two.

Objectives

Our objectives for this audit were to review the PRT program to determine

- Whether objectives and performance measures or metrics have been established.
- The status of future program plans in relation to reduction in U.S. military forces.
- Whether lessons learned are being captured that could be useful in other contingencies.
- The actions taken on SIGIR's prior recommendations.

For a discussion of the audit scope and methodology, see Appendix A. For an overview of the maturity model, see Appendix B. For a listing of the status of open recommendations from prior SIGIR audit reports, see Appendix C. For a listing of the acronyms, see Appendix D. For a listing of the audit team members, see Appendix E.

Performance Measurement Has Improved

OPA has developed a performance assessment system for evaluating provincial capabilities, however, it had not consistently required the PRTs and ePRTs to develop and submit work plans that identify activities planned to address areas of weakness identified by the assessment system. For example, our analysis of the August 2008 quarterly reporting period found that about 86% of the PRTs and ePRTs completed their assessments, but only about 32% prepared supporting work plans. This limits OPA's knowledge of whether the activities being conducted at the PRTs are appropriate and address the needs of the provinces. During the course of this review, OPA improved its procedures for preparing, submitting, and reviewing work plans.

Provincial Assessments

In May 2008, OPA issued an updated *Planning and Assessment User Guide* that identifies a process for assessing the capabilities of the provinces. The guide requires each PRT and ePRT to submit an assessment quarterly. In provinces that have both PRTs and ePRTs assigned, each was expected to provide an assessment. In November, 2008, OPA changed its guide, and PRTs and ePRTs within a province now submit one combined assessment.

PRTs complete the assessments by considering generic statements provided by the guidelines and making subjective assessments of where the PRT best fits the descriptions. Each PRT assesses its province in five areas (referred to as lines of activity); governance, political development, economic development, political reconciliation, and rule of law. Table 1 is an example of the maturity model for one of the lines of activity, political reconciliation.

Table 1—Maturity Model (Political Reconciliation Section)

| <div> <u>Maturity Model</u> <div> POLITICAL RECONCILIATION </div> <u>Provincial Assessment</u> </div> | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| | Beginning | Developing | Sustainable | Performing | Self-Reliance |
| Political Reconciliation | | | | | |
| Resolve Differences between conflicting parties | Establish the view that reconciliation with friends is not what Iraqis need to do, they need to reconcile with their enemies | Ensure GoI seen as representative of both sides, despite Sunni boycott of election | GoI take (and make) decisions and policies that cross the sectarian divide, and IO emphasize this. | Sunni engage fully in governance of Iraq | Differences are not seen as sunni vs shia. |
| Establish a genuine desire to reconcile through peaceful dialogue | Create, through current and emerging examples, a desire to establish security and economic sustainability via reconciliation | Generate discussion forums amongst Key Actors (Tribal Sheiks) that give rise to formation of combined shia/sunni tribal councils | Combined Tribal councils work together to put interests of the local Iraq above the interest of the local shia or sunni | Combined Tribal Councils provide non-sectarian governance at sub-provincial (local) level | Establish long-term security and economic sustainability |
| Sectarian enclave communities move toward truly mixed, and reconciled intra-shia/sunni communities | Create a desire to live in harmony | Facilitate methods of returning IDPs to original neighborhoods | Produce strong IO on small successes of returned IDPs emphasizing the security and economic benefits | Desire to return to own neighborhood and ability to return, so strong that inertia and momentum create own initiatives without GoI/CF involvement | Establish an environment that allows Suni and shia to live side by side, thus replacing Sectarian enclaves with mixed communities |
| | | | | | 24 |

Source: OPA 101 Slide Presentation

After a PRT assesses its provinces for all five lines of activity, it summarizes the results in an overview chart called the behavior statement (See Table 2). Assessments for both the maturity model and the behavior statement fall within five capacity levels:

- Beginning
- Developing
- Sustainable
- Performing
- Self-Reliant

Table 2—Overall Assessment Work Sheet

| | Beginning | Developing | Sustainable | Performing | Self-Reliant |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| Governance | | X | | | |
| Political Development | | | X | | |
| Political Reconciliation | X | | | | |
| Economic Development | | | X | | |
| Rule of Law | | | | X | |

Source: OPA Planning and Assessment User Guide, May 2008.

The OPA guide requires PRTs to provide statements of evidence about each line of activity that supports the capacity rating designated for the province. If necessary, the statements also highlight any resource issues that would enable the objective to move towards self-reliance or that are major blockers to achieving an upward trend. An example of an assessment is in appendix B.

The assessments and comments are also used as one of the inputs to the Provincial Overviews, documents prepared by the OPA Plans and Assessments Cell. The cell obtains and reviews the assessments and develops provincial overviews to brief senior officials. The briefings summarize information from multiple sources to present an overall picture of each province to the Joint PRT Working Group. The provincial overviews are used to brief the Ambassador and Commanding General, MNF-I and are described as an essential document for Chief of Mission decision making. The working group is to consider the performance of the province and, if necessary, to note issues that require higher direction and guidance from the Joint PRT Steering Group. That group sets new objectives and target dates to give direction and guidance to the PRTs as required. This direction is to be based upon the *Mission* and *Joint Campaign Plans* to maintain synchronization across all other agencies.

To determine how these performance measures contribute to PRT performance, we analyzed the assessments provided by the PRTs to OPA for the quarter ending August 31, 2008. Our analysis showed that 15 of the 16 PRTs completed and submitted the assessment. For the ePRTs, our analysis showed that 9 of the 12 completed the assessments. We found that the assessments were generally thorough.

One area that could be improved is to clarify the role and responsibilities of OPA's Plans and Assessments Cell in reviewing the assessments. Based on our interviews with cell officials, it is responsible for analyzing the assessments and performing quality control. However, its responsibilities, such as assessment factors and review feedback procedures are not identified in the *Planning and Assessment User Guide*.

Work Plans

According to OPA's *Planning and Assessment User Guide*, the next step after completing the assessment is for the PRT to update work plans to target efforts and resources toward improving

those lines of activity identified by the assessment as needing attention and setting priorities against *Joint Campaign Plan* objectives. The guide states, “The Assessment process will identify areas that are weak or need extra attention within the province. The PRT will then, in turn, focus on the weak areas and prioritize the work plan in order to improve the area. If an area is not improved within a defined amount of time (usually quarterly), then the tasks surrounding that area within the work plan may need to be revisited or additional resources allocated.” The guide states that work plans can be complicated or simple lists. In any event the aim must always be to obtain a positive trend upwards from the original base line assessment.

In SIGIR’s July 2007 report on PRTs,³ we noted that only 2 of 10 PRTs (Baghdad and Ninewa) submitted work plans to OPA, and recommended that the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and the Commanding General, MNF-I require PRTs to submit work plans for accomplishing objectives within established milestones. We followed up on this recommendation during this review and found that OPA had developed a *Planning and Assessment User Guide* that required work plans. However, while there has been some improvement many PRTs and ePRTs are still not updating the required plans. For example, for the quarter ending August 31, 2008, OPA had received updated work plans for only 5 of the 16 PRTs, and only 2 of the 12 ePRTs.

OPA’s guide is flexible as to the format and depth of PRT work plans, and our review of the plans that were submitted found that most submitted work plans were substantive. However, not all activities identified in some plans could be directly linked to a line of activity. We also noted work plans for activities such as Agriculture, Health, and Archeology that are not identified as authorized lines of activity. This is significant because progress in improving a province’s capabilities in the identified lines of activity is part of the criteria for PRT drawdown. Without the links, OPA may not be able to effectively determine if the work plans are consistent with OPA objectives.

We also noted that OPA’s guide states that desk officers are to ensure the work plan accurately reflects the Maturity Model assessments and the categories within them. However, some PRTs submitted work plans that did not support all five lines of activity. Without a plan to increase capacity in all activities areas needing improvement, the phase out of the PRT may be delayed. For example, the Ninewa PRT’s work plan for the August 2008 quarter identified activities in seven areas including:

1. Rule of Law
2. Governance
3. Economics
4. Reconstruction
5. Health and Education
6. USAID
7. Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

³ SIGIR 07-014, “*Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program Expansion in Iraq*”, July 25, 2007.

Activities addressing needs for the rule of law, governance, and economic development lines of activity are identified in the plan. However, activities for the political development and political reconciliation lines of activity are not identified. Additionally, reconstruction, health and education, and USAID are not identified lines of activity. While activities in these areas may be beneficial to the province, they may result in costs that do not advance provincial capacity and lead to PRT drawdown.

Oversight of Work Plans

SIGIR identified a number of opportunities to improve the oversight of the work plans, and during the course of our review OPA reissued its *Planning and Assessment User Guide*. The reissued guide now identifies a clear process for submitting and reviewing work plans.

During our review the PRTs were using the May 2008 version of OPA's *Planning and Assessment User Guide*, however, while the guide required the submission of written work plans and requires desk officers to review and understand the plans, it did not prescribe a specific response when PRTs fail to submit plans or submit plans that do not align with the lines of activity. The guide provided instructions to PRTs for developing and reporting the assessments, as well as for producing the work plans. PRT team leaders facilitate the plans' development, approve the plans, and consolidate them into one PRT work plan. The guide states that assessments and work plans should then be reviewed and understood by desk officers in Baghdad, who are assigned to specific PRTs. Desk officers are responsible for interacting with the OPA Plans and Assessment Officer and the PRTs, and should be "intimately familiar with their respective PRT/ePRT work plan." The guide also directed the desk officers to:

- read the work plan and understand how it relates to the maturity model assessment;
- know the work plan and understand its focus and priorities;
- understand the current provincial overview for their province;
- ensure the work plan falls within the objectives as defined by OPA.

Although some PRT officials and desk officers were aware of the requirements, others were not. One PRT section leader stated that her position was going to turn over, so it didn't make sense to create a plan to be implemented by a successor. One ePRT team leader stated that the ePRT had never prepared a written work plan in its existence, nor had the desk officer requested the work plan. Still another desk officer stated that the work plan did not have to be submitted every quarter and that a submission every six months was acceptable because the plans don't change that much.

Senior OPA officials also seemed to be aware that the work plans were not being submitted or did not fully align with the lines of activity. For example, in OPA's August 2008 provincial overview report it noted that the Najaf PRT had not submitted an updated work-plan for the quarter, and that the Ninewa work plan was aligned with the organization of the PRT sections rather than the Maturity Model. Additionally, the report noted that Ninewa's work plan identifies tasks and objectives but does not prioritize the tasks in accordance with Maturity Model Lines of Activity or findings. Similarly, the Kirkuk overview states, "The work plan submitted for this cycle is comprehensive, identifies areas of focus, tasks and objective. The

work plan is not well nested (*sic*) with the Maturity Model nor does it follow the functions of the [Maturity Model] annexes.”

On November 30, 2008, OPA issued an updated version of its guide, renaming it the *Maturity Model Handbook*. The new guide provides several significant changes and addresses the areas of concern cited above:

- Desk officers are now clearly responsible for the quality control of the PRT assessments.
- Desk officers are responsible for ensuring that PRTs complete and turn in their work plans within the reporting timelines.
- Desk officers are directed to report PRTs that do not submit work plans to the Deputy Director, OPA
- Desk officers are required to ensure the work plan’s focus and priorities address problems identified by the performance assessment.

These changes, if properly implemented should improve OPA’s internal controls over the process of reporting assessments and work plans. The handbook is now much more specific in its direction to the desk officers. However, improvement in the guide will not be enough unless OPA management improves the organization’s overall control environment.

In addition, a senior OPA official stated that OPA has established a Joint Common Plan Assessment Team that is working to improve the quality of the assessments. One idea is to use Iraqi input as a data source for the assessments through the use of surveys. Also, a senior OPA official stated that two more people were hired to fill slots in the Plans and Assessments Office.

Drawdown and Closeout of PRTs Is Condition Based, Leaving Timing Uncertain

In September 2008, OPA submitted a report to the U.S. Congress outlining the strategy for the eventual drawdown and close out of the PRTs. To detail how the drawdown process would be conducted, OPA issued another document on October 1, 2008, titled, *The Provincial Reconstruction Teams Transition Strategy – A Roadmap*. SIGIR's analysis shows these plans are condition based; that is the transition strategy identifies key events that will trigger the drawdown and close out of PRTs rather than a specific timeline for close out. SIGIR believes that given the recently signed security agreement and the deadlines for withdrawal, it is uncertain whether military resources will be available to support PRTs until all conditions for close out are met. Further, the relationship between the U.S. government and the Iraqi government continues to evolve raising additional questions about the future role of PRTs in terms of the assistance that may be desired by the Government of Iraq and how it will be provided.

OPA's strategy states that before making plans towards transition and drawdown, it is essential that a baseline of Iraqi Provincial Government capacity is established. As discussed earlier, OPA assesses provincial capacity using a maturity model that assesses five lines of activity. Each PRT prepares a subjective assessment of its province in these five areas every quarter. According to OPA's strategy, for drawdown in a particular province to be considered, the province must achieve three indicators of capacity; first, the maturity model must assess the province's capability as "sustaining" in all but the Economic Development line of activity, that is, four out of the five lines of activity; second, provincial elections must be complete; and, third, there must be freedom of movement for the Iraqi people. Once these three indicators have been achieved then drawdown of a PRT can be considered.

The next step in the consideration process is presenting an analysis to the U.S. Ambassador supporting the case for a PRT to commence drawdown. As noted on August 19, 2008, DoS and MNF-I issued a joint strategy titled *Strategic Framework to Build Capacity and Sustainability in Iraq's Provincial Governments*. The document replaced the original cable which established the PRT program. The framework identifies, at the PRT level, three separate elements that are linked in the coordinated assessment and planning process: the quarterly maturity modeling assessments, the Unified Common Plans which are developed in partnership by PRTs and their partnered military units, and actionable PRT work plans linked to the Unified Common Plans and assessments. These three documents are critical to achieving the events that will trigger the drawdown and close out of PRTs.

OPA's strategy emphasizes the importance of not being overly cautious and wasting resources, but also not withdrawing PRT support too soon and adversely impacting stability in the province. The transition strategy paper states, "It is, therefore, essential that OPA maintains a dynamic management overview of the PRTs and focuses the effort to arrive at the conditions required for drawdown as soon as possible." In provinces where a particular line of activity continually meets the sustainable level, team members with special skills could be moved to other PRTs.

Continuing military support is also important to the future of the PRTs. Senior MNC-I and MNF-I officials stated that the U.S. military is committed to supporting the PRTs and does not plan to withdraw resources from the program until it becomes necessary. An MNC-I official stated that the U.S. military wants to achieve security throughout Iraq with reliable power, potable water, health care, and the rule of law. The U.S. military leadership in Iraq believes these objectives are best achieved through support of the PRT program and have used the term “PRT primacy.” To achieve the goal, MNC-I is planning to apportion force structure as needed so that PRT security, movement, and logistical support are assured. A senior MNF-I official stated that there is a commitment that there will be no degradation of support. The official stated that if a PRT was making three movements per day, then the associated brigade has been directed to continue to support that rate.

MNF-I and MNC-I are also committed to maintaining the current level of civil affairs personnel of ten per PRT. A senior MNF-I official stated that more civil affairs specialists, which would include engineers and lawyers, are being deployed as the U.S. military is working jointly to tap specialists from the U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and other resources.

Notwithstanding these statements, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq signed a Security Agreement with the Iraqi Government on November 17, 2008. This agreement establishes the provisions and requirements that regulate the presence, activities, and withdrawal of the United States Forces from Iraq. According to the agreement, all U.S. troops must be withdrawn by December 31, 2011. SIGIR believes that a reduction in U.S. military support to the PRTs will certainly have a significant impact on their operations. While all PRTs and ePRTs are led by the State Department and consist primarily of civilian personnel, the teams rely heavily on U.S. military forces for their security, food, housing, and other support.⁴ OPA provides political and economic direction to the PRTs, but the local military commander has authority over the security and movement of ePRTs; and many others provide security for PRTs that are collocated with U.S. military units. Consequently, a gap appears to exist between the PRT closeout strategy and the future availability of military resources needed to accomplish that strategy.

Another uncertainty for PRTs is the desires of the Iraqi government. Provincial elections are scheduled to take place in late January 2009, and after that date there will be changes in leadership in the provinces. As a result, the relationship between the U.S. government and the Iraqi government will continue to evolve raising additional questions about the future of the PRTs. The new Iraqi officials may decide they want PRTs to provide different services or go away altogether. The U.S. government will need to determine what assistance may be desired by the Government of Iraq and how it will be provided.

In its written comments on a draft of this report, OPA did not agree with SIGIR’s draft recommendation that it should synchronize its transition plan with the U.S. troop reduction. According to OPA, the U.S. government aid and assistance program is not and should not become a function of the military presence in Iraq and, therefore, the PRT transition plan should not be locked into the hard timelines for the military withdrawal from Iraq. SIGIR agrees and

⁴ GAO 09-86R; Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq, Oct. 1, 2008.

modified the recommendation to say that the close-out strategy should take into account the impact of the U.S. troop reduction plans on PRT operational activities.

Lessons Learned Are Being Captured

OPA and DoD have put in place processes for capturing and sharing the lessons learned from their PRT experience.

SIGIR's review identified a number of processes for capturing lessons learned. For example, PRTs compile weekly situation reports that describe PRT and U.S. government agency activities in the province and the results. PRT team leaders also meet quarterly in Baghdad to discuss PRT activity. Several team leaders described those meetings as a great opportunity to exchange ideas.

The Center for Army Lessons Learned publishes the *Provincial Reconstruction Team Playbook*, which provides information on PRTs and suggested approaches when PRTs confront challenging issues. The playbook states that it is a living document and it is posted on the internet where individuals may join in a discussion of PRT-related topics and make recommended changes to the document. The playbook further states that when appropriate, the discussion topics and changes will be reflected in the next iteration of the publication.

In 2008, DoS began to develop a database of PRT lessons learned, based on information gleaned from interviews with redeploying PRT team members. The information is used to provide training for new incoming PRT team members. An OPA official stated that he is focusing on establishing a system of gathering the data. The system will be accessible to all participating agencies, including U.S. military, and information gathered over the years could be input into the database. The official stated that a focus of the system is to find best practices that would apply to other contingency environments.

Prior Recommendation Have Been Largely Addressed

SIGIR made 12 recommendations in prior audit reports relating to PRTs. Prior to this audit, eight of those recommendations were closed. Our current audit indicates OPA management action sufficient to recommend closing three of the four remaining open recommendations. One recommendation, to require PRTs to submit work plans for accomplishing objectives within established milestones, remains open awaiting further action. As noted earlier OPA has actions underway to address this issue. For a summary of the prior recommendations and management actions, see Appendix C.

Conclusions and Recommendations

OPA has taken action to develop a performance monitoring system to assess provincial capacity and the outcomes of PRT activities. The PRTs are preparing the assessments on a quarterly basis, but OPA has not consistently required PRTs to submit work plans properly aligned with program objectives. Until recently, OPA management had not developed effective guidelines and has not maintained a strong control environment that assures PRTs will develop and execute the work plans. Without effective work plans, achievement of PRT objectives may be delayed, resulting in higher costs to complete the program and delays in drawdown and closure of the PRTs.

Recent OPA management action has resulted in significant improvements to the OPA guidelines, by providing more specific direction to key personnel. However, the guidelines do not identify roles and responsibilities for OPA's Plans and Assessments cell.

Senior MNF-I and MNC-I officials stated that the U.S. military is committed to supporting the PRT program in Iraq, and OPA and MNC-I are close to completing a Unified Common Plan to enhance unity of effort between the two organizations. Additionally, OPA has developed a strategy for the eventual drawdown and close out of the PRTs. The strategy is based on a province achieving sustainability in four areas. Given different conditions across Iraq, some provinces will complete drawdown before many others. It is possible that some provinces may not complete transition prior to the departure of American troops.

DoS is developing a database for lesson learned from the Iraq PRTs that would be accessible by all participating agencies, including the U.S. military. The database would have a focus on best practices that could be broadly applied to other contingency environments.

Recommendations

We recommend that the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq take these actions:

1. Direct the Director of OPA to update the Planning and Assessment User Guide to include the following:
 - a. a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of OPA's Plans and Assessments Cell;
 - b. a process for the desk officers to account for all required PRT and ePRT submissions each quarter, including work plans for all five lines of action, and to provide feedback to the PRT or ePRT regarding missing or deficient items.
2. SIGIR also recommends that the Ambassador work jointly with the Commander, Multi-National Forces-Iraq to update the PRT close out strategy so that it takes into account the impact of U.S. troop reductions on PRT operational activities.

Management Comments and Audit Response

SIGIR received written comments on a draft of this report from OPA and MNF-I. Both sets of comments are included in Appendix F. OPA stated that it considers the report to be comprehensive, fair, and accurate. However, it did not agree with the draft recommendation to synchronize the PRT close-out strategy with U.S. troop reduction plans. According to OPA, the U.S. government aid and assistance plan should not be locked into the hard timelines for the military withdrawal from Iraq. SIGIR agrees and modified the recommendation to say that the close-out strategy should be updated to take into account the impact of U.S. troop reductions on PRT operational activities.

MNF-I concurred with our comment that PRT transition should be conditions based and stated that the U.S. troop reduction is a condition the PRTs should accommodate or at least recognize in their plans for transition.

Appendix A—Scope and Methodology

This audit was performed by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction under the authority of Public Law 108-106, as amended, which also incorporates the duties and responsibilities of inspectors general under the Inspector General Act of 1978. It was completed during the period of October 1, 2008, through December 28, 2008. It addresses OPA’s methodology and controls over their PRT performance monitoring system and the associated work plans. The audit also addressed OPA’s and MNC-I’s efforts to develop a UCP at the OPA-MNC-I level to address future planning for PRTs. The audit also addressed capturing of lessons learned on PRT activities.

To determine what objectives have been defined and what performance measures or metrics have been established to evaluate PRT effectiveness, SIGIR interviewed officials at OPA, the PRTs, the ePRTs, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division, and USAID. Additionally, we obtained and reviewed the applicable guidelines including:

- Strategic Framework to Build Capacity and Sustainability in Iraq’s Provincial Governments;
- The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) Transition Strategy – A Roadmap;
- OPA Directive 001;
- The U.S. Department of State Planning and Assessment User Guide (later updated and re-titled “Maturity Model Handbook”).

To determine how the established performance measures are used, and to what extent they help to provide credible oversight of PRT operations and accomplishments, SIGIR obtained and reviewed provincial overviews, maturity model assessments, and work plans for all PRTs and ePRTs. Using these assessments, we then interviewed officials at OPA, PRTs, ePRTs, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division, and USAID to discuss our analyses and obtain their perspectives on how the tools are used. We also conducted site visits to six PRTs, including Anbar, Baghdad, Babil, Diyala, Najaf, and Kirkuk. We judgmentally selected the sites we visited, based on selecting at least one site from each region that was accessible: central, east, west, north, and south central.

To determine the status of future planning for PRTs in Iraq in relation to any significant reduction in U.S., military forces, we obtained and reviewed the applicable guidelines including:

- Strategic Framework to Build Capacity and Sustainability in Iraq’s Provincial Governments;
- The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) Transition Strategy – A Roadmap;
- OPA Directive 001;
- Report to the Committees on Appropriations on the Strategy and Costs of Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Consulates in Iraq.

Using the guidelines, we then interviewed officials at OPA, the PRTs, the ePRTs, MNC-I and MNF-I, to determine how they used the documents. We also attended meetings between DoD and DoS, including the following:

- Joint PRT Working Group (JPWG)
- Joint PRT Steering Group (JPSG)
- Ambassador PRT Core

To determine the processes established to capture lessons learned on the work of the PRTs that could be useful in planning for other contingencies, we obtained and reviewed relevant documentation including:

- Weekly situation reports (SITREPS);
- U.S. State Department cables;
- The Center for Army Lessons Learned PRT Playbook

Using these documents we then interviewed officials at OPA, the PRTs, the ePRTs, GRD, and USAID.

To determine actions taken by U.S. government officials on recommendations made in previous reports relating to PRTs, we reviewed OPA responses to the prior recommendations, and conducted interviews with ITAO and DoS officials responsible for tracking SIGIR recommendations. We also reviewed relevant documentation including the U.S. Department of State Planning and Assessment User Guide and the PRT assessments and work plans to determine how they had been changed.

Use of Computer-Processed Data

We did not use computer-processed data for any aspect of the audit.

Internal Controls

In conducting the audit, we assessed certain internal controls pertinent to the audit objectives with respect to OPA oversight of PRT and ePRT assessments and work plans. Specifically, we identified and assessed internal or management controls including:

- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the maturity model assessment process and the assessments;
- Procedures for obtaining and reviewing PRT and ePRT work plans.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Prior Coverage

In conducting this audit, we reviewed applicable reports issued by SIGIR, USAID/Iraq – Inspector General, the Government Accountability Office, and the United States Institute for Peace.

SIGIR Audit Reports

Report No. SIGIR-07-015, *Review of the Effectiveness of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq*, October 18, 2007

Report No. SIGIR-07-014, *Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program Expansion In Iraq*, July 25, 2007

Report No. SIGIR-06-034, *Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq*, October 29, 2006

USAID/Iraq – Inspector General Reports

Report No. E-267-08-001-P, *Audit of USAID/Iraq’s Community Stabilization Program*, March 18, 2008

Government Accountability Office

Report GAO-09-086R, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan and Iraq*, October 1, 2008

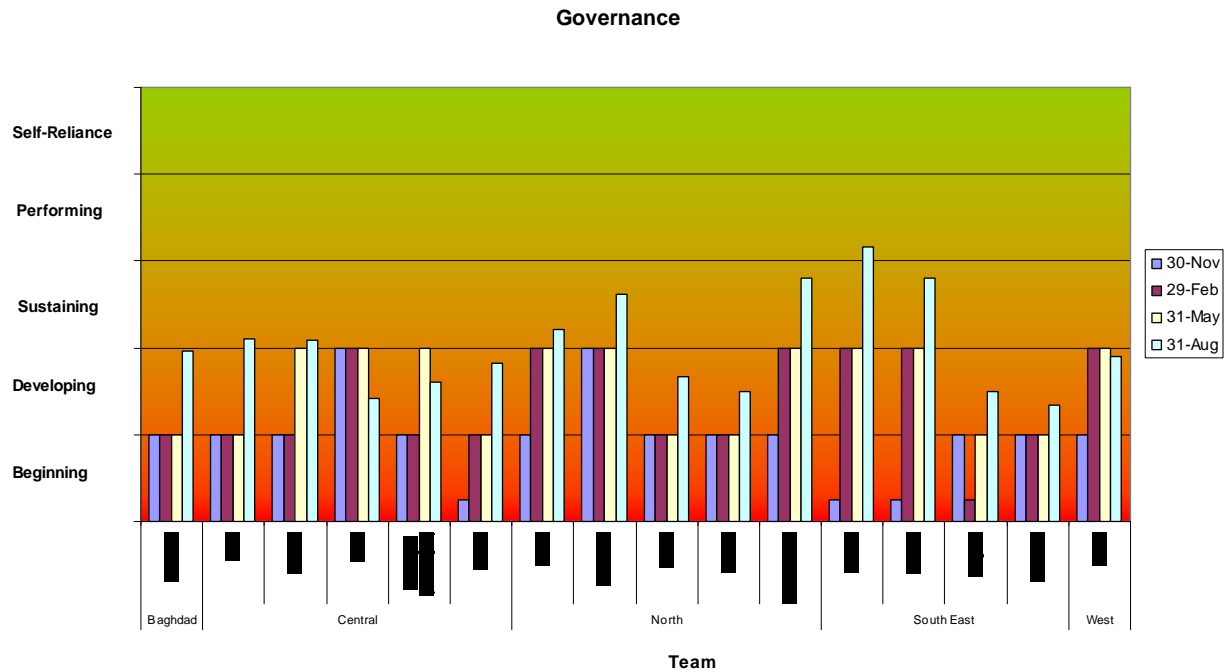
United States Institute for Peace

Evaluating Iraq’s Provincial Reconstruction Teams While Drawdown Looms: A USIP Trip Report, December, 2008

Appendix B—Example of an Assessment Summary

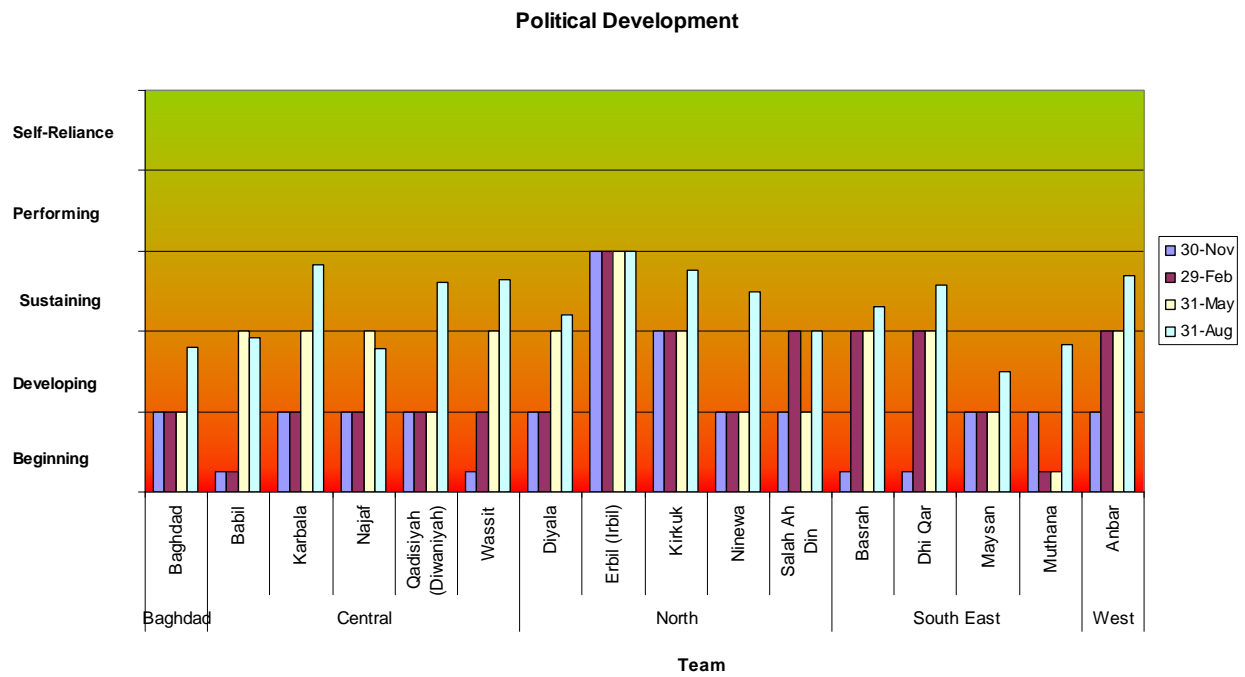
The following tables show how the PRTs assessed their provinces in each of the 5 lines of activity for the four quarters ending in August 2008:

Table 1—Governance



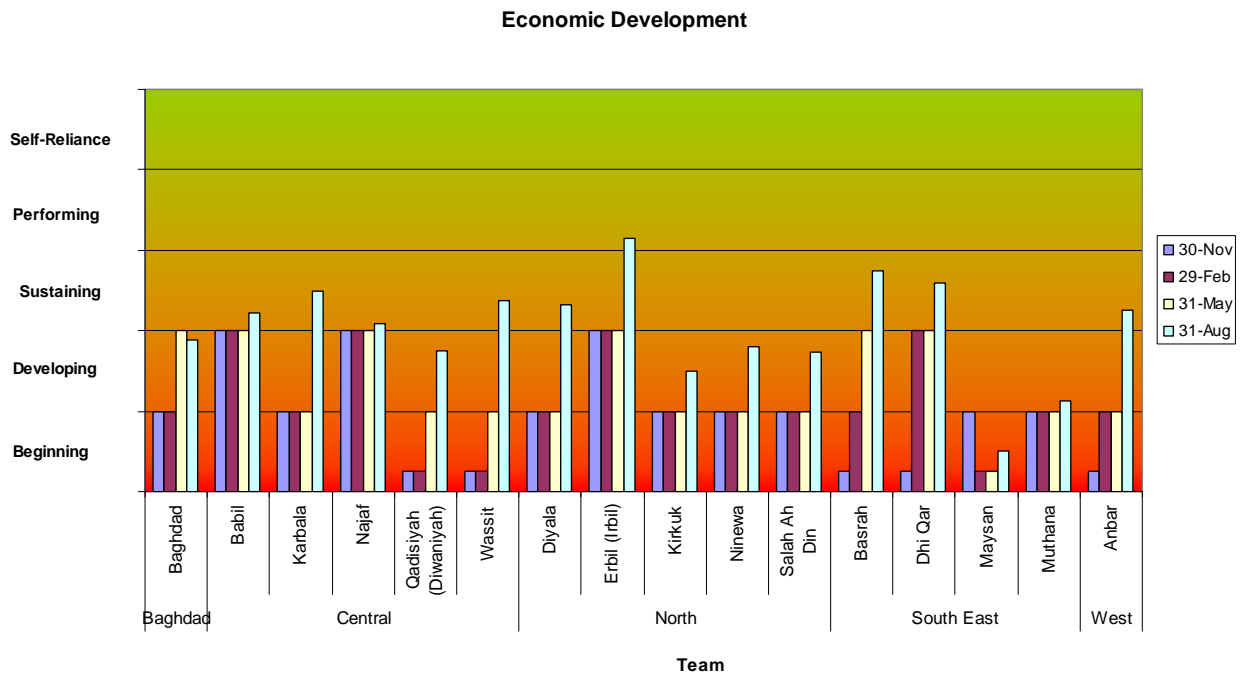
Source: OPA

Table 2—Political Development



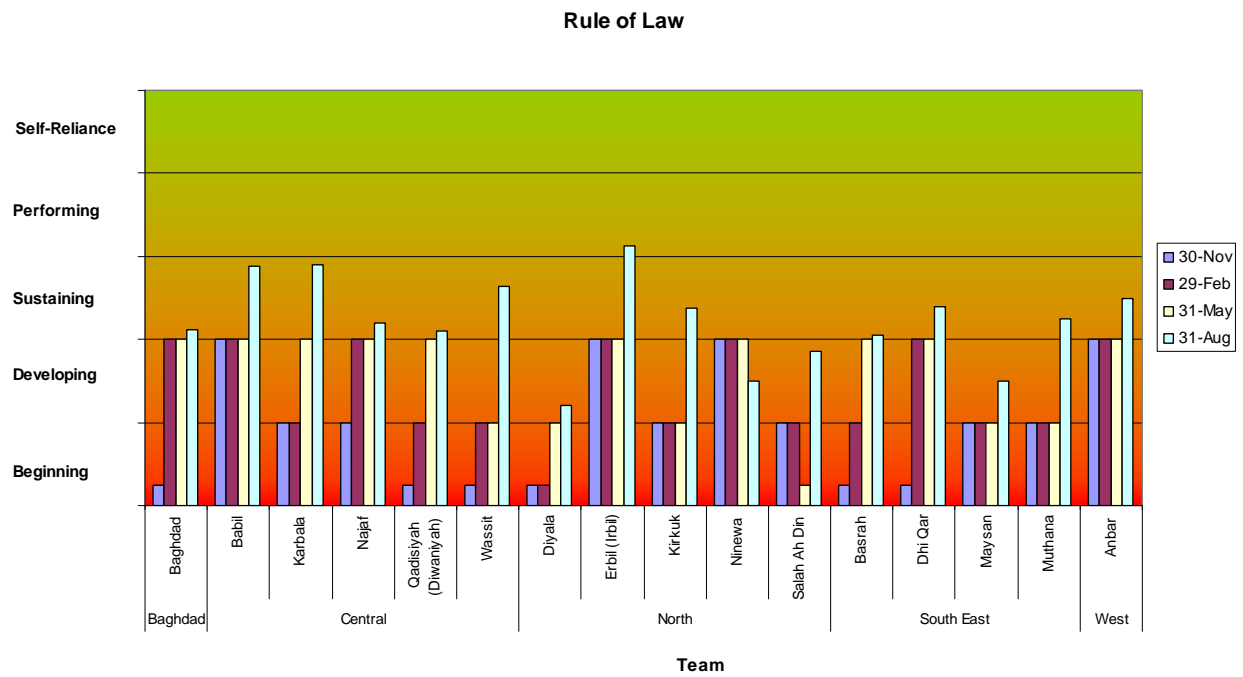
Source: OPA

Table 3—Economic Development



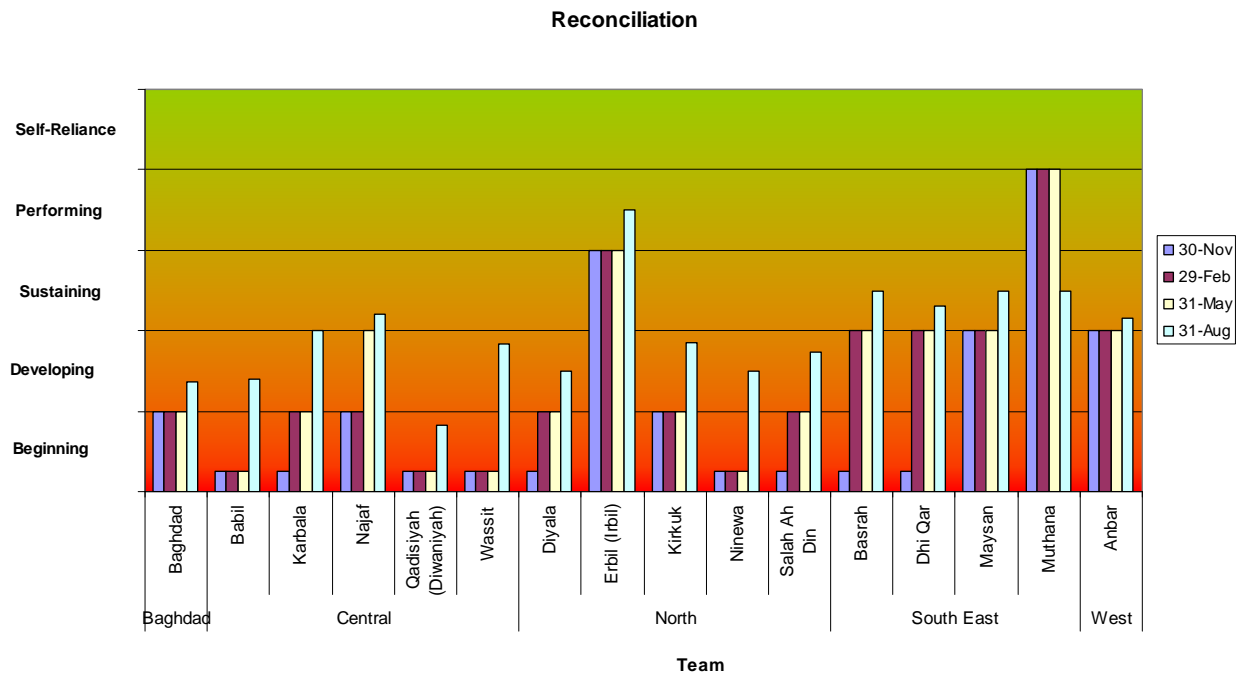
Source: OPA

Table 4—Rule of Law



Source: OPA

Table 5—Political Reconciliation



Source: OPA

Appendix C—Status of Prior Recommendations

An objective of this audit was to follow up on open recommendations made in prior SIGIR reports on the PRTs. In those reports SIGIR made 12 recommendations addressing management of PRTs. DoS and DoD had taken action to close eight of the recommendations prior to this review. As summarized below, this report discusses action taken on the remaining four recommendations issued jointly to the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and the Commanding General MNF-I.

Table 1—Summary of Status of Recommendations

| Report No. | Total | Open | Closed |
|--------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 06-034 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| 07-014 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| 07-015 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 12 | 1 | 11 |

Status of Four Open Recommendations

Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program Expansion in Iraq (SIGIR 07-014, July 25, 2007)

This audit report discussed the expansion of the PRT program. In May 2007, the Chief of Mission established OPA at the minister-counselor level to support the PRT program. Under the leadership of an ambassador-level coordinator, OPA is charged with synchronizing governance, reconstruction, security, and economic development assistance to the PRTs. The audit found that despite the creation of OPA, the Embassy had not been able to fill critical staff vacancies to establish continuity of leadership and experience in managing the PRT program. OPA and MNF-I had not clearly defined PRT objectives and performance measures; therefore we could not report on what the PRTs and ePRTs are accomplishing, individually or collectively.

- (1) Recommendation 07-014 (1):** Develop a performance monitoring system to determine what is being accomplished by the PRTs, including clearly defined objectives and performance measures, and milestones for achieving stated objectives.

Action taken: OPA responded by developing the maturity model assessment process with a set of objectives and metrics. The objectives and metrics focus on five key areas: Political Development, Political Reconciliation, Economic Development, Governance and Rule of Law. The metrics are organized along a maturity model depicting progress from initial stages of development to final stages of development. The U.S. Department of State has issued a Plans and Assessments User Guide to identify the process, as well as roles and responsibilities at the PRTs and OPA. Assessments were completed and submitted by the PRTs and ePRTs in the May and August 2008 quarters. The assessments do not have milestones, although the work plan

template cited in the guide does provide for milestones. This action is responsive to our recommendation and SIGIR is closing this recommendation: **Closed.**

- (2) Recommendation 07-014:** Require PRTs to submit work plans for accomplishing objectives within established milestones.

Action Taken: The U.S. State Department issued the Plans and Assessment User Guide which requires the PRTs to produce work plans. However, we observed that for the period ending in August, 2008 OPA could only produce work plans for nine of sixteen PRTs and two of twelve ePRTs for the quarter. The written work plans have not been consistently obtained and reviewed by OPA. SIGIR is leaving this recommendation open for further follow-up on planned OPA activities: **Open.**

- (3) Recommendation 07-014:** Develop a workforce plan for the Office of Provincial Affairs to fill critical staff vacancies and ensure continuity in leadership and experience managing the PRT Program.

Action Taken: In January, 2008 OPA responded via e-mail, stating “As of this reporting date, personnel have been hired against all surge positions. As of December 31, 2007, 298 of the 323 PRT surge team members are on the ground in Iraq. Seven DOD team members were on the ground, but recently redeployed home due to medical reasons. Seven team members are en route, and eleven Diyala team members are in training and preparing for deployment. In the future, team leaders will assess their staff needs on a quarterly basis and provide recommendations to OPA regarding needed positions as well as those positions which can be phased out. Those positions, which were vacant at the time of SIGIR’s October 2007 report, were filled by a combination of DoS contractors, DoS Foreign Service Officers, 3161s, and personnel from partnering agencies (USAID, DoJ [Department of Justice], USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture], DoC [Department of Commerce]).” During our current audit, we observed that the PRTs were well staffed. These actions are responsive to our recommendation and SIGIR is closing this recommendation: **Closed.**

Review of the Effectiveness of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq (SIGIR 07-015, October 18, 2007)

This audit report discusses progress in developing the nation’s provincial and local government capacity to effectively govern and manage its own reconstruction, despite continuing political and ethnic conflicts. We found that the development of clearly defined objectives and performance measures to guide the PRTs and determine their accomplishments was still appropriate. We also found frequent instances in which the military’s use of CERP to perform tasks that properly belonged to local and provincial government’s conflicts with the PRT’s capacity development mission.

- (4) Recommendation 07-015:** In an expeditious manner, jointly establish a comprehensive plan for the PRTs (including ePRTs), with elements tailored for each PRT. At a minimum, the plan should : (a) clearly define objectives and performance measures, (b) clearly define milestones for achieving stated objectives, (c) be linked to funding requirements, and (d) identify the organization(s) within each agency that are accountable for the plan’s implementation. To provide senior level attention to this issue, the plan

should be approved by the Office of the Chief of Mission and the MNF-I Commander to demonstrate each agency's commitment to this effort.

Action Taken: The Embassy Baghdad Deputy Chief of Mission and MNF-I Chief of Staff signed a Strategic Framework, which provides guidance to PRTs and defines the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders. On September 8, 2008, as a precondition to PRT program funding, an overarching strategy for conditions-based drawdown of PRTs was presented to the House Appropriations Committee. The milestones to achieving the end state and drawdown have been established: successful provincial elections; freedom of movement for Iraqis; and a protracted assessment of 'sustaining' in Governance, Rule of Law, Reconciliation, and Political Development. An inter-agency executive group, the JPSG, was established to approve strategies and plans for the PRT program. These actions are responsive to our recommendation and SIGIR is closing this recommendation: **Closed.**

Appendix D—Acronyms

| Acronym | Description |
|---------|--|
| DoS | United States Department of State |
| ePRT | Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team |
| MNF-I | Multi-National Forces - Iraq |
| OPA | Office of Provincial Affairs |
| PRT | Provincial Reconstruction Team |
| SIGIR | Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

Appendix E—Audit Team Members

This report was prepared and the review was conducted under the direction of David R. Warren, Assistant Inspector General for Audit, Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.

The staff members who conducted the audit and contributed to the report include:

Meredith Baumeister

Nancee Needham

William Shimp

Appendix F—Management Comments – U.S.Embassy



Embassy of the United States of America
Baghdad, Iraq

January 12, 2009

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
UNCLASSIFIED

TO: Deputy Chief of Mission – Patricia A. Butenis

FROM: OPA Director – Phyllis M. Powers

SUBJECT: OPA RESPONSE TO DRAFT SIGIR REPORT 09-013

OPA provides the following in response to the draft SIGIR report 'Provincial Reconstruction Teams' Performance Measurement Process has Improved' dated 5 Jan. Suspense for comment is 16 Jan.

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

- OPA considers the report to be comprehensive, fair and accurate.
- Eleven of the twelve outstanding prior SIGIR recommendations have been closed out. The remaining recommendation, PRT submission of work plans, will require another submission cycle in which to display consistent submission by the PTRs.
- OPA is in the process of implementing the recommendations for changes to the Maturity Model Handbook. However, OPA does not agree with the recommendation to synchronize the PRT close out strategy with U.S. troop reduction plans.

BACKGROUND

SIGIR has been examining the PRT program and has issued 3 reports since Oct 06. Previous reports have highlighted the need to establish a process to assess provincial capacity and this has been achieved with the Maturity Model; SIGIR has now closed this action item.

SIGIR has provided useful advice during past audits which OPA utilized to update and improve the Maturity Model Handbook. During this audit, SIGIR has again made recommendations to tighten-up two areas of the Handbook which they believed needed

additional clarification, 1) roles and responsibilities of OPA Plans and Assessment Cell; 2) desk officer requirement for accountability of the submission of work plans. These changes will be made prior to the next release of the Handbook in February 2009, for the March submission of the Maturity Model/PRT Work Plans. This will be done before the next quarterly input is due at the end of Feb 09.

The process for capturing lessons identified was explored by SIGIR and found to be satisfactory; no recommendations on this aspect were made.

SIGIR noted that plans have been developed for transition of the PRTs toward a traditional USG aid and assistance program under normal bilateral relations. However, SIGIR's recommendation that these plans be synchronized with the U.S. troop reduction plans is not supported. The transition plan for the PRT effort is currently conditions based and not chronology based. The USG aid and assistance program is not and should not become a function of the military presence in Iraq and, therefore, the PRT transition plan should not be locked into the hard timelines for the military withdrawal from Iraq.

Drafted: S A Borland
Cleared: P M Powers

Management Comments – Multi-National Force-Iraq

MNF-I RESPONSE TO 20090106-008 (MNF-I CT-3460)
Review of SIGIR Draft Report “Provincial Reconstruction Teams Performance
Measurement Process Has Improved” (SIGIR 09-013)

BACKGROUND: 1) provide comments directly to SIGIR NLT 16 Jan 09. 2) Send these comments via UNCLAS e-mail to Mr. Glenn Furbish (glenn.furbish@sigir.mil) or Ms. Nancee Needham at (nancee.needham@iraq.centcom.mil). 3) Any comments MUST be on letterhead and signed by an O-6 or above. 4) Provide copy of your UNCLAS response to ccigaudit@centcom.mil NLT 19 Jan 09.

QUESTION: To obtain command comments on the attached SIGIR draft report.

MNF-I RESPONSE: MNF-I responds with the following:

Concur with comment that PRT transition should be conditions based. PRTs and US troops collaborate to affect the conditions in Iraq. Their relative capability to contribute must be addressed and understood by each other. In many respects, PRTs become more important as overall troop strength is reduced. The improved security conditions should allow the PRT to be more effective and more important to the MNC-I/MNF-I/US Embassy mission. However, the reality of the US troop reductions is unavoidable. In as much as transition should be conditions based, the US troop formation reduction is a condition the PRTs should accommodate or at least recognize in their plans for transition.

UNCLASSIFIED

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This is an official MNF-I RFI response.

MNF-I CJ3 RFI Manager//DSN 318.239.9865//stratops.soc.rfi@s-iraq.centcom.smil.mil

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